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SUBJECT: MEXICAN AMBASSADOR DISCUSSESS RELATIONS WITH CUBA

Classified By: COM MICHAEL E. PARMLY FOR REASONS 1.4 B AND D

11. (U) Mexican Ambassador Enrique Gabriel Jimenez Remus gave COM a rundown on the status of bilateral topics over dinner on April 30.

12. (C) High Level Visits: A Calderon visit cannot be set until Cuban FM Felipe Perez Roque visits Mexico DF. At that time, the Cubans will carry a formal invitation from Raul Castro for the Mexican President to come. Jimenez predicted a possible November visit by Calderon. At that point, Jimenez said, "my job will have been finished." He anticipated he would depart soon thereafter as Mexican Ambassador and retire to his native Jalisco.

13. (C) Migration: Jimenez, who received two telephone readouts of the 4/29-30 visit to Mexico by a Cuban delegation to pursue the migration issue, said the two sides were pleased with the modest progress achieved to date. The next round has already been set for Havana May 13-14. The two sides were in rough accord on the scope of the problem, including the increasing use of Central America as the first step in the move north towards the U.S. The sticking point, Jimenez said is repatriation, and the Mexican insistence on an ability to monitor the status of those returned. Jimenez repeatedly probed COM on how returnees' status is monitored under the US-Cuban Migration Agreement. COM outlined current USINT practices. Comment: We will follow up Jimenez' Consular staff, to outline how we go about it.

14. (C) On business, Jimenez was most bullish. Next week would see the visit to Cuba of a delegation of some 120-150 Mexican business execs to explore opportunities to market their products. Jimenez remains hopeful, of exceeding last year's bilateral travel figures.

15. (C) Human rights only figured on the latest talks as an adjunct of monitoring returned migrants. The Ambassador agreed that Mexico is well-placed to press the issue, and especially, the release of long-term political prisoners. Jimenez thought the Vatican had raised the issue of prisoner release, but agreed the international community needed to keep pressing. Jimenez' sense, nonetheless, is that a large-scale political prisoner release is unlikely before Fall of 2009.

WILLIAMS